

Review of Post-16 Provision in Trafford

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Purpose

1 This paper sets out the terms of reference, scope and timescale for a review of post-16 education and training in Trafford. The review will lead to recommendations to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Greater Manchester for the development of a plan for:

- 16-19 provision for Trafford, and
- Trafford's contribution to delivering the skills needs of the Greater Manchester economy.

Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) will be a key strategic partner in the review.

Background

2 Trafford borough includes areas of extreme affluence in the south of the borough contrasting with inner city areas in the north of the borough which are severely deprived: in 2004 Indices of Deprivation Trafford ranked 136 out of 354 local authorities. Around 48% of Trafford residents are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations, compared to 39% for the North West. The largest sector is IT, finance and other business activities at 31% (North West 17%) followed by public admin, education and health at 16% (North West 23%).

3 In 2004, 64% of Trafford young people achieved five A*- C at GCSE (or equivalent) by age 19, higher than the England average of 53.7%. In 2005, 70.2% of Trafford young people achieved five A*- C at GSCE (or equivalent) by age 16 – the second best performing local authority in England after the Isles of Scilly.

4 In December 2005, 5.8% young people aged 16 to 18 were not in education, employment or training (NEET; the lowest average in Greater Manchester). There is not a broad enough spectrum of provision for young people who are disengaged from education and training. The LSC, Trafford Metropolitan

Borough Council and Connexions are working together to identify an appropriate range of provision for this client group that will be attractive to and efficient in engaging them and progressing them onto employment or further learning. This 're-engagement' provision will need to integrate with the Learning Agreement and Activity Agreement Pilots, as well as complement and link into existing/planned 'mainstream' provision. We anticipate inviting current or new providers to develop the 're-engagement' provision through an open and competitive tender.

5 Trafford has a good track record of delivering its Skills for Life targets. There is a multi-agency SfL strategy group which reports into the Trafford Adult Learning and Skills Group (chaired by the LSC).

6 LSC-funded provision in Trafford is offered by:

- two FE colleges
- eight schools with sixth forms (seven are grammar schools. Two are Catholic schools which are voluntary aided by the Diocese of Shrewsbury. There are two girls' schools and two boys' schools), plus two special schools with sixth forms
- one work-based learning (WBL) provider based in Trafford and number of other providers based in the Greater Manchester area.

Trafford's geographical location includes boundaries with Cheshire, Manchester and Salford. Accessible transport routes between Trafford and these areas mean that Trafford providers have wide travel-to-learn areas and that Trafford young people and adults undertake their learning both within and outside the borough.

7 Post-16 education and training may be segmented into a number of 'brands' which might prove useful to segment the review:

- 14-19 provision in schools, colleges and through work-based learning (14-25 provision for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities)
- adult provision to meet national, regional and local LSC skills priorities
- Train to Gain service for employers – both LSC-funded priority provision and employer-funded provision to meet skills needs
- provision in the community – personal and community development learning and 'first steps'
- higher education provision.

Objective of the Review

8 The primary objective of the review is to identify possible patterns of provision which will:

- ensure that the balance and mix of provision meets the current needs and future priorities of learners, employers and communities, while enhancing quality and increasing choice
- increase participation of young people in learning within the borough of Trafford and raise achievement at age 16 and 19

- support the implementation of the Skills Strategy in Trafford
- promote social cohesion and inclusion
- identify pathways, choice and progression to HE and the links and collaboration with HE providers.

9 The review will take account of:

- national priorities for post-14 education and training, for example:
 - DfES Five-year Strategy
 - Every Child Matters agenda
 - Education and Inspections Bill
 - 14-19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan
 - FE White Paper: *Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances*
 - Foster Review of Further Education
 - *agenda for change*
 - Skills Strategy
 - LSC National Priorities
- regional or sub-regional priorities, for example:
 - North West regional skills priorities
 - Greater Manchester Economic Development Plan
 - Greater Manchester Forum's skills priorities
 - LSC Greater Manchester's Annual Plan
- local priorities for example:
 - Trafford Community Strategy and Plan
 - Trafford Economic Development Plan
 - Trafford 14-19 Strategy and Plan
 - report of the Trafford Joint Area Review
 - specialisms of local schools, colleges and training providers.

10 It will build on previous reviews of provision in Trafford, such as:

- the incomplete Strategic Area Review of provision undertaken in 2003/04
- the Greater Manchester review of work-based learning completed in early 2005
- the 2005 self-assessment of 14-19 strategy developments in Trafford
- the curriculum audit of 14-19 provision conducted in late 2005.

Terms of Reference and Scope of the Review

11 Consultants undertaking the review will:

- examine the current and proposed location and range of post-16 education and training within Trafford
- examine the out-of-area provision undertaken by Trafford residents
- examine the demand for learning in the area, as identified by national, regional and local priorities
- compare supply and demand to identify any significant duplication and gaps in provision
- examine the case for rationalisation of, or change in, the existing structure of provision and consider possible new models of delivery.

12 Key questions to be asked are:

What are the needs of learners, communities and employers?

- what skills are required in the economy
- what skills issues are present in the local population
- what is the demand for provision
- what is required for different groups of learners, including specific communities, and what are the barriers that inhibit participation
- where is provision required
- how should learning be delivered
- how much public funding is available for learning

Is local provision of the right mix, type and level and in the right place to meet the identified needs?

- what is the range of provision available: level, mode and type
- who is participating/not participating (and for the latter: why)
- where is provision located
- when is learning available
- what scale of provision is available and what is the capacity
- how much does the provision cost and does it offer value for money
- are additional or different types of provision required
- is there oversupply or are there gaps in provision

Is the provision of sufficient high quality?

- what are the inspectorates' views of the provision
- how do providers self assess/evaluate their provision

- what are the success, achievement and retention rates for all modes of learning
- is provision flexible, responsive to needs and capable of innovation and change.

13 LSC Greater Manchester and Trafford MBC will provide consultants with the basic data and textual information for the study, including learner numbers by sector subject area for school, further education provision and WBL provision, copies of sub-regional and local strategies and plans.

14 Consultants will build on discussions with key local stakeholders undertaken during the Strategic Area Review. Views of potential learners, both young people and adults, must also be gathered.

Outcome of the Review

15 The review outcome will be a report to LSC Greater Manchester which covers:

- summary of the current delivery pattern of post-16 provision in Trafford
- options for future delivery patterns, taking account of the needs of 14-19 year olds, employers, the Trafford community in the context of national, regional and local priorities
- recommendations on how the options might be implemented and risks associated with them
- recommendation of a preferred option for consideration by LSC Greater Manchester and strategic partners

16 The report will be likely to include annexes which will give more detailed information on the delivery of post-16 provision, the needs of the Trafford area and the views of local young people and adults.

Timescale and Conduct of the Review

17 The contract holder for the project will be LSC Greater Manchester. The project will be overseen by a small steering group, chaired by LSC Greater Manchester, and including representatives of Trafford MBC, Connexions, the two college principals, three Trafford headteacher representatives and a training provider representative.

18 The timescale for the project is three months, commencing 1 May 2006. The consultants appointed will meet with the steering group on a monthly basis and will produce a draft report by the end of June 2006 and a final report by the end of July 2006. The final report will be published on LSC Greater Manchester's website. Consultants will be expected to give a presentation on the draft report to the steering group and a presentation on the final report to LSC Greater Manchester's Executive Team.

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